



The Florida House of Representatives

Office of the Speaker

Richard Corcoran

Speaker

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SPEAKER RICHARD CORCORAN NAMES CONSTITUTION REVISION COMMISSION APPOINTEES

Tallahassee, FL – Speaker Richard Corcoran today announced his nine appointments to the Constitution Revision Commission. Upon announcing his selections, Speaker Corcoran said,

“I've said it on numerous occasions, I would only appoint Commission Members who understood and respected the role of our constitution and the separation of powers. I believe all these appointees share that respect and understanding. With that as a foundation, these appointees are diverse, principled, and won't march in lockstep with anyone. And my only charge to each has been to do what they believe to be right. I am sure that each Member appointed today will do their part to ensure freedom and the rule of law are embodied in our final product.

Speaker Corcoran went on to say, **“This decision was difficult and many distinguished and capable leaders were considered. I thank all who submitted applications or expressed their desire to serve. Florida is blessed with incredible men and women who are eager to serve and I won't forget the dozens who sought to enter the arena.”**

Speaker Corcoran concluded by saying, **“The decision making process did place a premium on past or current elected office. The rationale behind this being that those who have placed their name before the people have an excellent understanding who they work for.”**

The appointees are as follows:

2017 Constitution Revision Commission Appointee Biographies

Representative Jose Felix Diaz



Representative Jose Felix Diaz is an attorney, husband, and father of two children. He currently represents House District 116 in Miami-Dade County. He earned a bachelor's degree in English and Political Science from the University of Miami in 2002. While at the University of Miami, he had the distinction of serving as Student Government President. In 2005, he earned a *Juris Doctorate* degree from Columbia University where he studied State Constitutions. While at Columbia University, he was active as Student Senate Parliamentarian, sat on the American Bar Association Governance Commission, and was Senior Editor of the American Review of International Arbitration.

Jose has been Chair of the Energy & Utilities Subcommittee (2012-2014) and the Regulatory Affairs Committee (2014-2016). He currently serves as the Chairman of the Commerce Committee, overseeing a wide variety of issues including insurance, gaming, tourism, professional regulation, and energy. He has also had the distinction of serving as the Chairman of the Miami-Dade Legislative Delegation (2015-present) and as Vice-Chairman of the Miami River Commission. In addition to holding prominent positions within the Legislature, Jose has had the privilege of being appointed to serve on several boards and councils, most notably as the Florida Representative to the Southern States Energy Board (2013-present) and as Chairman of the Public Service Commission Nominating Council (2013 & 2015).

Speaker pro tempore Jeanette Nuñez



Speaker *pro tempore* Jeanette Nuñez is a small business owner from Miami-Dade County where she currently represents House District 119. She is married and has three children. She has served in the Florida House of Representatives since 2010. Jeanette earned her bachelor's degree in 1994 and a master's degree in 1998 from Florida International University. She has also earned a Six Sigma certification from the University of Miami in 2007.

Speaker Nuñez was recognized as a Hispanic Woman of Distinction in 2007. She currently sits on the Board at Kristi House, a children's advocacy center responsible for sexual abuse cases in

Miami-Dade County, and is affiliated with the Women's Healthcare Executive Network. In 2016, she was appointed to the National Assessment Governing Board by the United States Department of Education.

Speaker *pro tempore* Nuñez began her career in government as a Legislative Aide to then-Senator Diaz de la Portilla (1995-2004). She has served as the Deputy Whip of the House (2011-2012), Chair of the Higher Education & Workforce Subcommittee, and Chair of the Government Operations Appropriations Subcommittee. She was named Speaker *pro tempore* of the House of Representatives in 2016.

Representative Chris Sprowls



Representative Chris Sprowls is an attorney currently representing House District 65 in Pinellas County. He resides in Palm Harbor with his wife and their two children.

Chris was first elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 2014 and has consistently fought to improve health care and education in Florida. He currently serves as the Chair of the House Judiciary Committee.

Chris has a long history of community and public service. As a high school senior, he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease, a form of cancer. Due to his experience with cancer at an early age, he has been very active assisting others who have been diagnosed with cancer. He has served as a coordinator for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life and served as the Advocacy Chair for the 2014 Dunedin Relay for Life. Chris has also volunteered with the North Pinellas YMCA and serves on the YMCA of the Suncoast Healthy Living Committee.

Chris earned a bachelor's degree from the University of South Florida in 2006 and a *Juris Doctorate* degree from Stetson University College of Law in 2009. Upon his graduation, Chris became an Assistant State Attorney for the Sixth Judicial Circuit, serving Pasco and Pinellas counties. During his time with the State Attorney's Office, Chris prosecuted a number of criminals—including murderers, kidnappers, and child abusers—to help keep his community safe for families.

Senator Tom Lee



Senator Tom Lee currently serves Senate District 20, consisting of parts of Hillsborough, Pasco, and Polk counties. For over 30 years, he has been a licensed real estate agent and an owner of Sabal Homes of Florida where he currently holds the positions of Vice President and Director. He received an associate degree from Hillsborough Community College in 1982 and a bachelor's degree in Business from the University of Tampa in 1984.

Senator Lee was first elected to the Florida Senate in 1996 and, during his 15 years in the Senate, he has held a variety of leadership positions. In 2004 he was chosen by his colleagues to lead their chamber as President of the Senate (2004-2006). Senator Lee has also served the Senate as Chair of the Rules Committee from (2000-2004), Chair of the Appropriations Committee (2014-2016) and chaired a Senate Select Committee to implement constitutional amendments passed by the voters in 2002. Prior to his election to the Senate, he served as a member of the Hillsborough County City/County Planning Commission and the Hillsborough County Zoning Board of Adjustment. During his term as Senate President, Senator Lee was a strong advocate for ethics reform and fiscal responsibility.

In 2005, he championed the passage of Florida's gift ban, designed to promote more ethical conduct by elected officials and those who lobby state government. He also authored a constitutional amendment adopted by the voters in 2006, requiring the legislature to produce a long range financial outlook to guide the legislative budgeting process. That same amendment created the Florida Government Efficiency Task Force to develop recommendations for reducing cost and improving the operations of state government. During his tenure in the Florida Senate, he has received over 50 awards for his leadership and dedication to public service from community and business groups.

Dedicated to giving back to his community, Senator Lee has also been active in a number of professional and philanthropic organizations. He formerly served as a Presidential Elector, Chair of the Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce, Chair of the Hillsborough County Republican Executive Committee and as a member of the Advisory Board of Brandon Regional Hospital. Senator Lee is currently a member of the Brandon Advisory Board of the Bank of Tampa and serves on the Board of Directors of the Straz Center for the Performing Arts, A Kid's Place of Tampa Bay and the Tampa Bay History Center.

Senator Darryl Rouson



Senator Darryl Rouson first moved to Florida in 1959. In 1977, he earned a bachelor's degree at Xavier of New Orleans and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Florida Law School in 1980. While in law school, he was also the President of the Black Law Students Association. He currently resides in St. Petersburg with his wife and their five children while practicing law with the Dolman Law Group.

Senator Rouson has earned a reputation as a trailblazer in business and the community. In 1981, he became the first African American prosecutor in Pinellas County where he was also awarded the Florida Prosecutor Association Award. In 2003, he was appointed the first chairman of the newly formed Substance Abuse and Addictions Task Force for The National Bar Association. He also has had the distinction of serving as President of the St. Petersburg NAACP from 2000-2005, Chairman of the St. Petersburg Black Chamber, and as a member on the Taxation and Budget Reform Commission in 2007.

Senator Rouson began his successful public career in 2008 when he was elected to the Florida House of Representatives. He successfully won a seat in the Florida Senate in 2016—serving parts of Hillsborough and Pinellas counties. He has a reputation for being an excellent orator and debater, and as an elected official capable of reaching across the aisle to work with his counterparts.

Sheriff Chris Nocco



Sheriff Chris Nocco has served the people of Pasco County since 2009. He lives in Pasco County with his wife and their three children. Originally from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Sheriff Nocco earned a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Delaware in 1997 where he also earned a master's degree in Public Administration (state and local management). Chris earned a certificate in Emergency Management from Florida State University in 2005. He is a graduate of the FBI- National Executive Institute, the Executive Leaders Program at the Naval Postgraduate School, and a graduate of the National Sheriff's Association's 101st National Sheriff's Institute.

More recently, Sheriff Nocco earned a Certificate in Business Excellence at Vanderbilt University in 2016.

Chris has extensive law enforcement experience, having served with the Philadelphia Public School Police, the Fairfax County Virginia Police Department, and as a deputy with the Broward Sheriff's Office. He was a first responder on 9/11 and during the Washington Sniper Incident.

Sheriff Nocco was a Staff Director to Representative Marco Rubio in the Policy and Procedures Office responsible for domestic security, criminal justice, economic development, and transportation issues. He also served as Deputy Chief of Staff of the Florida House of Representatives and as Chief of Staff at the Florida Highway Patrol.

He is actively involved in his community where he serves a number of roles and positions dedicated to making Pasco County a better place for all families.

Erika Donalds



Erika Donalds lives in Naples and is married with three sons. She is a Certified Public Accountant and a Certified Global Management Accountant. Having graduated Magna Cum Laude while earning a bachelor's degree in Accounting from Florida State University, she went on to graduate Summa Cum Laude while earning a master's degree in Accountancy from Florida Atlantic University.

Mrs. Donalds is the Chief Financial Officer / Chief Compliance Officer and Partner at Dalton, Greiner, Hartman, Maher & Co., LLC—a New York-based investment management firm—where she has worked for over 12 years. She has great experience managing financial reporting, budgeting, audit & tax, and compliance with the Global Investment Performance Standards.

She has a history of public service, most notably for being an active participant seeking to improve Florida's education system. She has experience being an elected official as she has served on the Collier County School Board for 4 years. She was also a founding member and past President of Parents Rights Of Choice for Kids (R.O.C.K), a non-profit organization focused on representing parent and student interests at the state and local level

Rich Newsome



Rich Newsome is the senior partner of the Newsome Melton law firm and represents individuals and families in complex civil litigation.

Rich attended Florida State University where he received his bachelor's degree in Political Science and Economics, and then received his Juris Doctor from the University of Florida College of Law in 1989. While at both FSU and the University of Florida, Rich worked for the Florida House Minority Office.

After law school, Rich worked as a federal prosecutor for the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Northern and Middle Districts of Florida. During his time with the U.S. Attorney's Office, Rich prosecuted a variety of cases ranging from white collar fraud to narcotic conspiracies. Rich left the U.S. Attorney's Office in 1993 and went to work for a large product liability defense firm in Orlando, where he represented manufacturers.

In 2001, Rich was appointed by Governor Jeb Bush to the Fifth District Court of Appeals Judicial Nominating Commission and served as the JNC's Chairman during his term. He is a Past-President of the Orlando Federal Bar Association, Past-President of the Florida Justice Association, Past-Member of the Board of Governors of the American Association for Justice, and Past-President of the Central Florida Trial Lawyers Association.

Rich currently serves as a Member of the Board of Directors for the Florida Guardian Ad Litem Foundation and is a past member of the St. James Cathedral Parish Council.

Additionally, Rich owns a staffing company, 4 Corner Resources, with his brother Pete Newsome. 4 Corner, with offices in Orlando and Tampa, specializes in recruiting and placing employees in the IT and technical sector. In 2017, 4 Corner was recognized as "Best of Staffing" by Inavero for both client and candidate satisfaction, and as one of Central Florida's "Best Places to Work" by the Orlando Business Journal. The company was also recently recognized by Inc. Magazine as being one of the "Fastest Growing Companies in America."

Rich's family has deep roots in Florida, going back nine generations to St. Augustine. Rich and his wife Marcy live in Orlando and have three children.

John Stemberger



John Stemberger is an AV Rated Orlando civil trial lawyer who has litigated and argued high-profile First Amendment and constitutional issues. In 2001, he was appointed by Gov. Jeb Bush to the Judicial Nominating Commission for the Ninth Judicial Circuit where he served eight years.

Stemberger has a long history of serving children and youth organizations, including volunteering as a Guardian Ad Litem for 13 years with the Orange County Bar's Legal Aid Society; serving as Chairman of the Board for WIN Family Services, a large foster care and child welfare agency in the inner city of Baltimore, Maryland; and in 2013, helping found Trail Life USA, a Christian scouting movement for boys which has grown to almost 700 troops in 48 states.

Stemberger has been a conservative policy advocate for over 30 years, and since 2005, has served as President of Florida Family Policy Council (FFPC).

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